



Cooperative Agreement No. AID-182-A-12-00001
Quarterly Report 1
(For the period October – December 2012)

NAME OF PROJECT: Building Human and Institutional Capacity in Albania

Goals and Results to Be Achieved

The goal of the Building Human and Institutional Capacity (BHIC) project in Albania is to build the capacity of institutions, governmental, non-governmental and private sector, as well as leaders and technical experts who play a key role in Albania's development as it strives to bring about the reforms necessary for European integration. Within the Mission's overarching goal of *European integration through strengthened democratic institutions and inclusive economic growth*, Assist Impact focuses on building capacity to address the two stated Development Objectives of 1) *strengthened rule of law and improved governance* and 2) *conditions created for broad-based, sustainable and inclusive economic growth*. With substantial involvement of the Mission, Assist Impact provides a flexible approach to meeting capacity building needs that includes in-country, U.S., and third-country training of current and potential leaders and experts, institutional assessments of key private organizations/public institutions, targeted technical assistance and focused grants.

By the end of the three-year period, BHIC will achieve the following results:

- Strengthen the performance of at least 5 Albanian central and local governmental organizations, including Albanian ministries and municipalities.
- Strengthen the performance of at least 15 (approximately 5 per year) Albanian non-governmental organizations and private sector entities, including associations, civil society organizations and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- Build the performance of at least 45 (approximately 15 per year) leaders of Albanian governmental, private sector and non-governmental organizations and institutions – across sectors including business, economics, human rights, governance and democracy.
- Build the expertise of at least 45 (approximately 15 per year) technical specialists – across sectors including business, economics, human rights, governance and democracy.

	Indicator	Target for FY 2013		Actual for this period		Cumulative for FY 2013	
1	Number of government institutions receiving capacity building assistance	2		1		1	
2	Number of non-governmental institutions receiving capacity building assistance	5		5		0	
3	Number of government institutions that have removed a barrier or constraint to improving performance	2		0		0	
4	Number of non-governmental institutions that have removed a barrier or constraint to improving performance	5		0		0	
		men	women	men	women	men	women
5	Number of leaders trained, mentored, receiving technical assistance or grants	7	8	0	0		
6	Number of technical specialists trained, mentored or receiving technical assistance or grants	7	8	371	42		
7	Number of leaders whose performance has been improved	7	8	0	0		
8	Number of technical specialists whose performance has been improved	7	8	0	0		

PROJECT-FUNDED TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THIS PERIOD

	US Training	In-Country Training	Third Country Training	Technical Assistance	Institutional Assessments	Grants
# of Participants/beneficiaries	0	0	2	0	0	0
Male	0	0	2	369		
Female	0	0	0	42		
# of gov't institutions	0	0	1		0	
# of non-gov't institutions	0	0	0	5	0	
# of Interventions	0	0	1	1	0	0
Major Sectors			Governing Justly & Democratically	Economic Growth		

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THIS PERIOD

1) PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND OFFICE SET-UP

This period was mainly devoted to set-up but several capacity building interventions were also begun. Regarding project office set-up, Assist Impact revised contracts for the senior capacity building expert/executive director, finance/administrative officer and program officer and hired an additional ¾ time program officer. The additional program officer was also given specific financial duties as required per USAID's pre-award recommendations to separate the cashier function from accounting and include a second approval signature for expenses. The office

premises were expanded with the rental of a conference room one floor above. A laptop computer, smart phones, private health insurance, a photocopier and a conference room table were procured. Other planned furniture items were requested from another USAID-funded project with a planned closure of early 2013.

Considerable effort was devoted to sorting out and revising service provider contract content and subaward formats in light of the cooperative agreement. Clarity about the difference between service provider and recipient was an issue. Assist Impact considers all providers for which it requests specific services as service providers and not recipients. Also, Assist Impact's assumption of the level of service provider requiring concurrence from the Agreement Officer required clarification. Whereas Assist Impact assumed that only the main, technical program service providers required concurrence, further clarification indicates that the wording of the Cooperative Agreement currently requires all program related service providers including restaurants and taxi services. Efforts are under way to establish criteria to avoid concurrence for minor providers.

Assist Impact discovered that some of its procedures used for grant administration in the past must be revised. These revisions have yet to be done.

Assist Impact appreciates the considerable effort USAID has gone to in order to help Assist Impact understand and meet its agreement requirements.

World Learning's sub-award

World Learning provided input and guidance on the following areas:

Compliance:

World Learning provided guidance regarding preparation of the sub-agreement's construction to ensure incorporation of all standard provisions. The resulting document could also serve as a template for future sub-awards between Assist Impact and US NGOs. In addition, World Learning also clarified questions regarding the type of contract mechanism to use for working with service providers from Albania and other countries.

Monitoring Plan:

In early December, Assist Impact requested guidance regarding the submission of a monitoring and evaluation plan for Building Human and Institutional Capacity project that would illustrate data for two different types of institutions/organizations (governmental and other) and the number of leaders and number of technical specialists whose capacity Assist Impact has increased. In response, World Learning sent several document templates and examples (*PIRS Template; Standard Parts to a Field PMP; Revised Performance Monitoring Plan; and Kirkpatrick Hierarchy of Training Results*).

Assessments:

In October, World Learning began the discussion of how best to provide assistance with organizational assessments and training for Assist Impact staff to conduct future assessments, following Assist Impact's meeting with USAID/Albania to discuss possible assessments for the State Inspectorate and the Directorate of Civil Emergencies. World Learning offered

suggestions on how best to structure such a visit and what it should consist of, e.g., to conduct the assessment of an organization solely or to combine it with Assist Impact staff training, offering suggestions for who could best fill the need. By end-December, Assist Impact had suggested a Spring timeframe.

Procurement of experts:

In December, Assist Impact alerted World Learning to a request for an in-country intervention on Public-Private Partnerships. On December 21, just before Christmas break, World Learning received the request for training, which will require expert assistance to aid three NGOs to develop a small-scale PPP project from design to contract stage. Expert assistance is required for the review of proposals and procurement of NGOs to work with local government, in essence working with the NGOs to build their capacity to structure and manage a PPP project.

Reports:

A Work Plan, called an Intervention Plan, was developed with most suggestions coming from the Mission and accepted by Assist Impact. The Intervention Plan was submitted early and includes 21 major program interventions (assessment, training, technical assistance or grant). Somewhat more funds were 'programmed' than available, since experience shows that some programs turn out to not be feasible. Indeed, the lack of responsiveness on the part of the State Civil Emergencies Directorate has led Assist Impact to drop that intervention from its efforts.

A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was developed and submitted on time. The simple plan addresses both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitative indicators include the number of institutions (disaggregated by governmental or non-governmental/private) provided assistance as well as the number of leaders and technical specialists (disaggregated by men and women) provided assistance. Qualitative indicators measure whether performance has been improved or constraints to improved performance have been removed.

Financial reports with actual versus budgeted expenses as well as the 'checkbook' showing program related costs were provided to the Agreement Officer's Representative on a monthly basis.

2) PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS

Training, Technical Assistance and Grants

Regarding capacity building programs, one third-country training for the Central State Inspectorate was begun and completed. Visa problems caused the originally selected participants to be unable to attend, but other Central Inspectorate staff were identified at the last minute and enabled to attend.

Another program procured and begun during this period provides Technical Assistance to increase access to capital for agribusiness and strong farmers. The program began in early December and will continue through early February. By the end of December, 411 businessmen and women involved in farming, agro-processing, consulting, agricultural equipment sales as well as some working in agricultural extension had attended seminars in five different regions. In addition, the leadership of five banks had increased their awareness of the business opportunity

presented by European Union funding to agriculture in Albania and the need to plan to adjust policies and reach out to clients. It remains to be seen in Q2, how many participants received coaching and applied for such funding, an indication of improved performance.

Preparation for and approval to move forward was obtained for three other programs in this period. One was a training course in Electoral Processes for the Central Election Committee and selected staff organized in coordination with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other partners, due to take place in January. Participants were identified, hotel venue and transportation services procured. Another program requiring major preparation this period addresses the need for the training of judges in insolvency/bankruptcy procedures. The lead trainer was approved and a letter of support as well as the main contents of a Memorandum of Understanding drafted for the Magistrate School. Finally, a major effort to provide local government units with needed support and expertise for Public-Private Partnerships was prepared and approved so that the local organizations and foreseen international expert could be procured and begin in Q2. The program to identify and recognize impartial judges was not begun in Q1 so that other programs such as the Central Election Committee course, unforeseen at the time of the Intervention Plan, could be organized. This impartial judges program may continue to be postponed as Election Observation and other programs take priority

Assessments

Institutional Assessments planned tentatively for late Q1 or Q2 were postponed until Q3 for several reasons. Assist Impact plans to add another senior program officer in April and it would be important to include her in the training that World Learning will provide. The Central State Inspectorate plan to launch its system of on-line e-monitoring of inspections in early Q2 and it would be better to assess the institution's needs after the system had started to function. Finally, the delay gives time to properly identify the other institution to be assessed during World Learning's visit. Since the assessments were postponed, of course the performance solutions listed on the Intervention Plan were postponed.

J-1 Visa Processing Services

	This Period	FY 2013	Cumulative
# of contractors provided services for	1	1	1
# of trainees processed for other contractors	3	3	3

J-1 visas were processed for three participants from the Chemonics-implemented JUST project. The processing included Assist Impact uploading into TraiNet newly required tax documents for the first time.

3) RESULTS

It is too early to assess performance improvement results but the discussion above regarding access to capital for the agricultural sector leave reason to believe this intervention will produce tangible results.

4) IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Contractual

Assist Impact will continue to need guidance and assistance to fully understand certain requirements of its cooperative agreement and formats/procedures for meeting those requirements. The contracting (agreement) office in Kosovo provided invaluable assistance in this direction, with a junior contracting officer spending considerable time on a Saturday trying to sort out program-related service provider approval templates. A visit to the Assist Impact office is planned for January highly welcome by Assist Impact.

Financial

Assist Impact sees no significant cost overruns. The Executive (Project) Direction/senior capacity development expert worked well above the 80% level of effort foreseen due to the unexpectedly steep learning curve in project management mentioned above. This increase in level of effort may be compensated for in savings in other administrative expenses and/or a lower level of effort at a later date.